United Nations E/CN.6/2008/NGO/4

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
11 December 2007

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-second session
25 February-7 March 2008
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

Statement submitted by Armenian International Women's Association, Armenian Relief Society, Bahá'í International Community, Christian Children's Fund, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Defence for Children International, Dominican Leadership Conference, Evergreen Club of Ghana, FEMVision, Grail, International Center for Research on Women, International Council of Jewish Women, International Council of Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of University Women, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation, League of Women Voters of the United States, Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, National Council of Women of the United States, NGO Committee for UNICEF, Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Association, Perhaps Kids Meeting Kids Can Make A Difference, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Society for Women and AIDS in Africa, Soroptimist International, UNANIMA International, VIVAT International, Women's World Summit Foundation, World Movement of Mothers, Zonta International

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

07-63641 (E) 070108

Statement

The above mentioned NGOs, working toward the realization of gender equality for women and girls as a means to establish secure and healthy societies, are happy to participate in the theme of financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Emphasizing that financing for girls' equality with boys and for the empowerment of girls is a basic and sound strategy for the implementation of all human rights, as well as for achieving measurable progress on the theme of the fifty-second session of CSW,

Reminding everyone that our present global reality continues to be characterized by severe and pervasive violence and danger to the lives and well being of girls on all continents. "Trafficking, smuggling, physical and sexual exploitation and abduction, as well as the economic exploitation of children, even in its worst forms, are daily realities for children in all regions of the world, while domestic violence and sexual violence against women and children remain serious problems."[1] This state of vulnerability of girl children belies a commitment to full gender equality. We can and must do better to reach universal human rights.

In an effort to make girls visible and make a world fit for girl children, We,

Recall that in the Beijing Platform for Action, Section L, governments called attention to the need to overcome the gender stereotypes that exist in many societies in order to allow girls to develop their full potential;

And that the 51st session of CSW acknowledged a lack of attention to girls in policy and programme development and in resource allocation. CSW 51 urged governments to "... give explicit attention to the girl child in budget processes at all levels, including resource allocation and expenditure reviews, to ensure the mobilization of sufficient resources for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against girls";[2]

Furthermore CSW 51 recognized that the empowerment and participation of girls is key to breaking the cycle of discrimination and violence experienced by the girl child and urged governments to facilitate the participation of girl children in all matters that affect their lives;[2]

And in A World Fit for Children, the governments of the world declared they were "determined to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child throughout her life cycle and to provide special attention to her needs in order to promote and protect all her human rights, including the right to be free from coercion and from harmful practices and sexual exploitation."[1] They further promised to "promote gender equality and equal access to basic social services, such as education, nutrition, and health care, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, vaccinations, and protection from diseases representing the major causes of mortality, and will mainstream a gender perspective in all development policies and programmes;"[1]

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[1] General Assembly resolution S-27/2, annex.

[2] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 7* (E/2007/27-E/CN.6/2007/9).

4. Create processes and venues in policy and decision-making bodies where the voices of children, particularly of girl children, will be heard. Girl children can make contributions in:

- education methods and structures
- poverty reduction
- child soldiering
- HIV/AIDs
- reproductive health
- child abuse
- trafficking

5. Ensure policy makers have access to national research data that is disaggregated by gender and age so that they can make appropriate resource allocations.

We recommend that international and multilateral sources of financing for gender equality

Integrate funding for girls and women throughout the lifecycle when allocating funds for gender equality.

We recommend that UN agencies and NGOs

1. Integrate a lifecycle approach in all gender related programmes, policies and initiatives.

2. Engage in action that draws the attention of governments to the promises made for girls' human rights and demand government accountability and evaluation.

3. Ensure that girls are partners in identifying their own needs and in developing, planning, implementing and assessing policies and programmes to meet these needs.

We, the here-signed NGOs, are ready to engage in partnership with all states parties, all UN agencies, especially with UNICEF, to make the world fit for the girl child. We look for strong policy and determined implementation from this 52nd session of CSW.